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Saturday, January 3, 2026

More on the need for a new Master Plan

UC President Clark Kerr hands the Master Plan to Gov. Pat Brown

Yesterday, we posted about the need for a new Master Plan. In that post, we noted that community colleges were seen as competing with CSU by offering 4-year undergraduate degrees, to the dismay of CSU authorities. But, in a way, CSU is striking back through a program of automatically admitting high school students, some of whom might alternatively go to a local community college.

From CalMatters: *What's good for Riverside County is good for the whole state: After a pilot to automatically admit high school students into the California State University system in the Inland Empire county took off last fall, lawmakers this year passed a law to greenlight a similar program statewide next fall. Leaders at the California State University last year launched the pilot to attract more students to the university system and to steer some to campuses that have been struggling with enrollment declines.*

The pilot worked like this: University officials and high schools in Riverside County pored over student course completion and grade data to identify every county high school senior who was eligible for admission to the 10 of 22 Cal State campuses chosen for the pilot. Then the students received a brochure in the mail last fall before the Nov. 30 submission deadline, plus digital correspondence, telling them they were provisionally admitted as long as they submitted an application to one or more Cal State campuses, even those not in the pilot, and maintained their high school grades.

Starting next fall, all students in California will be eligible for the automatic admissions program, which will expand the roster of participating Cal State campuses to 16. Cal State will release more information on the program's implementation in February, its website says...

Full story at https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2025/12/cal-state-admission/.

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In theory, UC might also be affected by community colleges diverting students into their bachelors programs or by CSU automatically admitting high school students, although the competitive nature of admissions to UC acts as a shield. But apart from students, there is also the question of limited state dollars going into higher ed, and who gets them.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: community colleges, CSU, Master Plan, politics, State Budget, UC

Straws in the Wind - Part 211

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

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- UC-AFT

Topics

From NPR: *Brandeis University says it is revamping its humanities offerings to focus on preparing its students for the workforce. It is one of a number of schools making such moves... It's a tough job market out there for recent grads, and more young people in the U.S. are questioning the need for a college degree. That's putting liberal arts colleges under pressure to prove their value, like Brandeis University in Massachusetts, where educators are trying to reimagine the humanities. ...Brandeis is focusing on building skills and giving students work experience before they graduate.*

...[A] job-shadow program is part of Brandeis' plan to make the world of work a little less mystical. Starting next year, every student here will have the chance to take what they learn in class and apply it in real work settings. It's also adding more student support. Brandeis president Arthur Levine says as soon as they step on campus, every student will get two advisers - one academic, one career - and two transcripts... One will have the grades and the course they took, and the other will be a record of what they know and what they can do...

Levine says the economy is changing dramatically, so schools also have to evolve and make sure students are acquiring concrete skills like communication, digital literacy, critical thinking and adaptability. Brandeis, with its roughly $1.4 billion endowment, could've coasted along for years, but with fewer potential students, the school has been discounting more than 60% of its tuition just to fill its seats...

For the past year, Levine's been pitching his restructuring plan to improve the quality of a Brandeis education to professors, and it worked... Eighty-eight percent of the faculty voted in favor. You never see that level of agreement on anything at a university...

The No. 1 reason why students enroll in higher ed is to get a good or better job... And if families continue to feel graduates are leaving campuses unprepared for the workforce, Busteed predicts more colleges will soon follow Brandeis' lead...

Full story at https://www.npr.org/2025/12/21/nx-s1-5640789/more-young-people-are-questioning-the-value-of-college-some-universities-are-rethinking-liberal-arts-programs.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Brandeis, tuition

Commencement 1976

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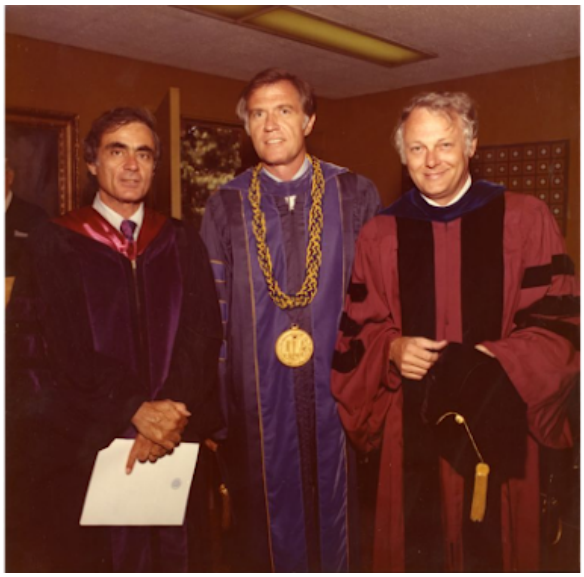

Commencement 1976, Robing Room: Vice Chancellor Harold Horowitz, Chancellor C.E. Young, and Exec. Vice chancellor Wm. P. Gerberding.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: miscellaneous, UCLA

Friday, January 2, 2026

Again - The State Needs a New Master Plan

UC President Clark Kerr hand the Master Plan to Gov. Pat Brown

Just about a year ago, we returned to a periodic theme on this blog: the need for a new Master Plan.* Back in the 1950s, California had UC, the state colleges (now CSU), and the community colleges (often under the same local authorities that ran the K-12 system). The 1960 Master Plan created a division of labor between the three systems. It expired in 1975 in its original form, although folks kept referring to it thereafter.

Basically, since that time, CSU has wanted to be more like UC and the community colleges have wanted to be more like CSU. But for a long time, those tendencies were held in check by the Master Plan - or at least the memories of it. But the erosion has accelerated.

From EdSource: *A new analysis appears likely to bolster the attempts of some California community colleges to start offering bachelor's degrees, despite protests from state universities that claim their own programs would be harmed. For more than two years, proposed degrees from seven community colleges have been effectively blocked by California State University campuses, citing a state law that allows them to object to programs they believe duplicate their own degrees. The degrees would add to more than 50 others that are already offered at community colleges across the state. While officials emphasize that no final decisions have been made to approve the blocked degrees, a recently issued state-commissioned report sides with the community colleges on a pivotal point. The report by the nonprofit organization WestEd suggests that the location of a community college is a relevant factor and that bachelor's degrees should not necessarily be considered duplicative if the objecting CSU campus is not geographically close to the community college.*

The WestEd report emphasizes that part of the legislative intent of Assembly Bill 927, the 2021 law allowing community colleges to create bachelor's degrees, was to serve students who are place-bound and can't leave their hometowns to attend college...

Dozens of new bachelor's degrees have been approved around California without incident over the past few years. But for the blocked degrees, WestEd was contracted last year to conduct a

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No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

neutral third-party report. That main report is an overarching analysis of the bachelor's degrees and the approval process for them. Separately, WestEd also produced college-specific reports for each of the proposed degrees in question. WestEd declined comment for this story. The reports are informational and do not render final decisions. A community college system chancellor's office spokesperson said discussions with CSU's chancellor's office are ongoing, and both systems declined to comment on the nature of those conversations.

But officials from at least two community colleges say they have been told to expect favorable news as soon as mid-January, when the board of governors for the community college system next meets...

Full story at https://edsource.org/2025/blocked-by-csu-community-college-bachelors-degrees-closer-to-approval-following-new-analysis/747647.

In a way, we are back to the 1950s with no effective plan and lots of *ad hoc* decisions. But funding for higher ed is constrained. So, some form of a revised Master Plan is needed. For that to happen, however, Gov. Newsom would have to do what Gov. Pat Brown did back in the day and set the process in motion.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/12/a-plan-to-undo-plan.html; https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/01/groping-for-new-master-plan.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: community colleges, CSU, legislature, Master Plan, politics, UC

Straws in the Wind - Part 210

From the NY Times: ...*The New School in New York City is facing a financial crisis and a dramatic restructuring that some professors and students fear will lead to the collapse of its liberal arts and social science programs, even as its president vows the plan will lead to a stronger university. An unexpected drop in enrollment this fall raised the stakes, with leadership warning that the university will not be able to pay its bills by June if things don't change. Staring down a projected $48 million operating deficit for this fiscal year, administrators have started to implement a plan to close, overhaul or merge about 30 academic programs or majors; pause nearly all admissions to doctoral programs; and offer buyouts or early retirement to what professors say is about 40 percent of the full-time faculty.*

At a protest in December, dozens of professors and students marched against the cuts, which some warned would send the New School into a death spiral by undermining its reputation and sparking more reductions in enrollment. But Joel Towers, the New School's president and leader of the restructuring effort, argues that a transformed university will emerge on the other side of the pain, one that is more relevant and interdisciplinary, drawing on the university's strengths in the liberal arts, performance, and art and design...

The crisis at the New School reflects the enormous pressures facing higher education across the United States at a time of ballooning costs, federal policies limiting research grants and international enrollment and decreased student interest in the liberal arts. But the problems are particularly acute at the New School, which has run at a roughly $30 million a year deficit for the last two years even though it charges undergraduates top-dollar tuition. The proposed cuts are designed to put the New School, which includes the Parsons School of Design, the Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts, the College of Performing Arts and the New School for Social Research, back on firm financial footing.

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Though the New School relies on international students to help pay its bills, about 280 fewer of those students enrolled this fall compared with the year before, as the impact of new federal policies on student visas hit. Domestic enrollment also fell slightly. At a school with an estimated total annual cost of $88,000 for a full-time undergraduate student living on campus, the difference added up...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/19/nyregion/new-school-nyc-cuts.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, New School, poli

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 106

From the NY Times (Recapping events of 2025): *The letter landed with a thud... in the inbox of Harvard University's president, Alan M. Garber. The message, from Linda McMahon, President Trump's education secretary, conveyed an understanding of an emerging deal between Harvard and the White House that flew in the face of the terms the university had been insisting on. Dr. Garber felt he had made clear in recent negotiations that the university would not agree to pay the federal government to settle a monthslong battle with the Trump administration over antisemitism on campus and other matters. But Ms. McMahon's Saturday message said the opposite. In it, she thanked Dr. Garber for what she portrayed as his commitment to sending $200 million to the government as part of a deal.*

Dr. Garber wrote back to clarify Harvard's position. But, in response, the administration doubled down, introducing terms that were so far-reaching that university officials saw them as nonstarters. It was unclear whether Ms. McMahon's interpretation of Harvard's proposal resulted from a miscommunication or from a deliberate effort to force the university into a year-end deal after months of faltering negotiations. Whatever the case, it was the latest twist in the long-running dispute between Harvard and the Trump administration, which has shaped up to be the marquee battle in the administration's effort to exert more influence over elite colleges and universities it views as too liberal.

The episode also underscored the emerging role played by people inside the administration who want to extract more concessions from Harvard. And it raised new questions about whether some of those voices were more interested in preserving the power of the government's threat against Harvard as a message to other universities than in reaching a settlement with the nation's wealthiest university...

The university has acknowledged that antisemitism had spread through parts of Harvard, affecting to some extent hiring, coursework and the culture of the campus in Cambridge, Mass. Dr. Garber, who is Jewish, has said he was "sorry for the moments when we failed to meet the high expectations we rightfully set for our community," and has taken steps to combat antisemitism at Harvard. The Trump administration, though, has routinely depicted Harvard's efforts as tardy and insufficient. And Mr. Trump has suggested that he is looking to punish Harvard for both perceived past misdeeds and its defiance this year...

Harvard officials, already anxious about the prospect of backlash to any settlement with a president many on campus see as autocratic, are sensitive to the details of any agreement. For months, they have viewed an accord between Brown University and the Trump administration as a model. *Under that agreement, Brown agreed to spend $50 million on state work force development programs over a decade. The university did not have to enter into a rigorous monitoring agreement, and it secured a provision that Brown leaders viewed as safeguarding academic independence.*

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

Trump administration officials had initially signaled that Harvard could secure some terms similar to those offered to Brown. But administration officials now contend that Harvard's troubles in recent years were far graver than Brown's. Some also point to Harvard's colossal endowment as a reason that it should pay more. Harvard has made clear that it is willing to spend more than Brown, but the university's opposition to treating any portion of that payment as a fine is grounded in its belief that its failures fell short of violations of federal law and are no worse than any other school's. Some at the university believe that agreeing to a fine would be tantamount to a bribe or an admission of guilt and that it would be depicted that way by detractors — even if a settlement were to explicitly say the university did not acknowledge wrongdoing...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/24/us/trump-harvard-letters-deal.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: Brown University, diversity, Harvard, politics

Thursday, January 1, 2026

Reading the Blog: 4th Quarter 2025

As we do at the end of each quarter, we provide the blog in pdf format for reading or downloading. Of course, in that format video and audio are not available. Alas, we have not been able to put the quarter in true book format since the service for doing so has disappeared from the web.

Still, we do our best.

You can find the fourth quarter of 2025 at:

https://archive.org/details/blog-oct-31-oct-21-2025

Posted by California Policy Issues at 6:34 AM No comments:

Labels: miscellaneous

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